

- JE**        Yep, yep and that's okay because she has a teacher that works beside her, you know, and she would've explained how she does that. She gets that teacher to take the class and then the teachers request [*background noise*].
- TL**        But Adam didn't have that support in 2016?
- JE**        I'm trying to, I will find out for you the exact structure there. But if it had been requested that's, you know, it wouldn't be beyond the deputy taking a class if that was the only allocation or looking ## to ... okay, and that's how other teachers work if they need to meet with another teacher, they say, "Well I need to do this". Like an example is a maths coach, "I need to do this, could you look at releasing a teacher within the next three weeks?" and I would look at who's coming in and out of my school, whether I've got some extra support to be able to do that and we'd manage that within that timeframe.
- TL**        On 15 March 2017, this is when he's doing the Italian role and the two half days SEP. Adam emailed you at 9.48 pm and he says, "I'll be working from home tomorrow. Thought it best to have the day off site as I'm having some health problems. I saw Maree today to let her know. I'm sorry if it's an inconvenience. I'll be starting verification requests for Jackson. Just need to do it at home. Don't need to be replaced. Sorry for the late message". Do you remember receiving that?
- JE**        Yes, I do. That was his day where he does verifications and that's fine with me, if he wanted to work from home.
- TL**        Did you know what he was meaning when he said, "I'm having some health problems?"
- JE**        He ... that was the time at the beginning of the year where there were also some family, ongoing escalating family issues and Adam often ... Adam never spoke about his family issues. And often the two were married together for Adam.
- TL**        Did you know that Adam experienced a psychological breakdown in June 2017?
- JE**        I was notified of that.
- TL**        Yep. Prior to that, had there been any, you said that he was teaching Italian very well, was there any indication to you that he was struggling with the workload?
- JE**        No. But Adam always did his best at work. His work meant everything to him.
- TL**        It's been suggested to me that Adam was finding teaching very hard and the back-to-back Italian classes were exhausting him. He told us that he regularly needed to leave the classroom and shut the door as the noise and the business were overwhelming, created sensory challenges. He'd then re-enter the classroom once composed. Had you been made aware of that early stage during 2017?
- JE**        No, but in any classroom role ...

**JE** When I went on leave, which is probably the worst thing I've ever done, Adam was in a good space, I came back to a mess.

**TL** Yes, okay.

**PB** We might have a break I think, we've been going for an hour.

**TL** Okay, sure.

**PB** These are very, very long sessions. I think it's best that Jenny keeps having regular breaks.

**TL** Okay, sure, yep, that's no problem. I'll just stop the recording.

**TL** Okay, this is a continuation of the interview with Jenny Easey.

So I wanted to discuss with you now your response to allegation 5 and we have already discussed part of this through our discussions with allegation 4 and other allegations. So, you say in your response that Adam was supported by a full time deputy principal, a .5 teacher and two full time teacher aides. And we have discussed that a little bit earlier and you were going check I think about the teacher aides.

**JE** [Agrees].

**TL** Okay. And you say that you provided him with mentorship and that you arranged those supports for him. You say in your response that Adam didn't like to be seen as not coping.

**JE** He wanted to always do a good job and yet he did 110%, that was Adam.

**TL** Okay. And you said that he would tell you he was fine when offers were made to meet and discuss or have a chat.

**JE** So often I offered to change the catch ups and meet, he didn't wanna do that, often. And there was no reason for me to call him in because he wasn't on a plan to review or anything like that. But we do an informal catch up and it made me confident that other members of that team were checking in with him as well.

**TL** And you said before that you thought you had a good working relationship with Adam.

**JE** Yep.

**TL** Yep. It's been suggested to me that he was fearful of you.

**JE** It didn't appear like that and I would say that we had a good relationship. There've never been any discussions around unsatisfactory performance or anything like that.

**TL** So in relation to Adam attending HOSSES cluster meetings, it's been suggested to me that Adam was only able to attend one of those meetings and that you declined or either requested him to attend those meetings?

**JE** Absolutely. And I've been 100% committed to supporting both of them for the sake of [REDACTED] and for both of the employees. But if I can go back to how staffing and budgets work, the prep transition role was a role that I created out of people funding which is called I4S money.

**TL** Yes, I was going to ask you what that is.

**JE** We get \$257,000 for our school and we are allowed to allocate that to whatever resources, but we need to do a plan and to be transparent to the community in the region. Her two days a week was out of that money.

**TL** Out of that money.

**JE** And everybody in the school knows that, that goes through an LCC which is a Local Consultative Committee, a union rep and management reps and then it's put on our website for everybody to see it.

**TL** So you would deny that you spent any money that had been budgeted for special needs on establishing or maintaining Tara's prep transition officer role?

**JE** Absolutely.

**TL** You say that Adam was often very fatigued at the end of a work day and he indicated the need to go home to rest.

**JE** [Agrees].

**TL** Was there ... and I think you mentioned before that because you could see how things were going for him that you kind of ... I can't remember the exact words you used but basically that you kind of forgave him things that you would have expectations of other teachers?

**JE** I had less expectations on Adam's performance than others, yes.

**TL** Yes, and because you ...

**JE** Cause I understood his ...

**TL** His condition and ...

**JE** [Agrees] and his needs for his family and the dynamics of the family was breaking down. It was going to be no ... I was in no position to put any pressure on any family member.

**TL** Yep. You say in your response that at no time was Adam required to work through lunchtimes and I do not believe that he would have felt obliged to work through his lunchtimes.

**JE** [Agrees].

**TL** If you just turn to the final page of Adam's diary note. So item 10 he says, "No professional development, no budget". And that you've explained your response to that already, that you did provide him with professional development and that Tracy

including SEP and the things that we're talking about today, and the other one is curriculum.

**TL** So, are you saying that whether or not Adam's workload was reasonable, was not a question for you?

**JE** It does sit within Tracy's area of responsibility. And I guess I'd ask if you've interviewed Tracy around those questions?

**TL** Yes, I did. Yep.

**JE** Did you have adequate information from Tracy?

**TL** Tracy gave me a full account.

**PB** Can I just ... to be clear, just so I understand and Jenny understands the questioning. By that last question you had, are you saying that Jenny has responsibility for the workload of everyone in the school and needing to know in-depth everything that's happened if there are other line managers dealing with the ... how many staff have you got?

**JE** 100.

**TL** No. What I was asking Jenny to ... it was sort of saying ... I was asking about whether you thought Adam's workload was reasonable. And from the answer that you gave me, I took from that that really wasn't a question for you about whether his workload was reasonable because you had deputies and that you're not a principal by yourself and that ...

**JE** Correct.

**TL** So, that's what I was asking. Is that that ... if you say that ... yeah.

**JE** Absolutely. And there is a team approach to that. Adam is not the only one. And there has been flexibility in that team. And Tracy's role is not a timetabled role. So, she has the ability to be able to work with those people around getting those resources, getting the professional development, putting the resources in place to complete the jobs that we need to do.

**TL** Do you think that, you being Adam's rehabilitation officer during 2014 into 2015, and given the concerns you told me you had about his performance in the role in 2016, did you not then consider how he was going in the role in 2017?

**JE** Absolutely. I always kept an eye on Adam, and if there was anything he needed, I'd check in with him and support him. But that doesn't mean that with that ... the professional development to partake in his role; that sits with Tracy. But the welfare ... yes.

**TL** Yeah. And you were saying before that Adam wanted to keep the one day of SEP administration. But given your concerns about his performance in the role in 2016, why did you let him do that?

JE He wouldn't have heard any different concerns than what had already been addressed.

TL So there had been discussion?

JE Yeah.

TL So you just said though, that *[talking together]* ...

JE Not by me, by Tracy. So, any time those concerns came in Tracy in her regular meeting would address those and also helped Adam to be able to get that job or that task finished to satisfaction.

TL So do you know that Tracy had discussions with Adam about the concerns that had been raised?

JE I was asking Tracy to give the feedback.

TL And do you know if she did?

JE I wasn't sitting in her room. All I can do is be ... to be requesting for my deputy to do that role.

TL Yeah. So when you ... in having that meeting with Adam on the final day of 2016, had you assumed that he'd already been made aware of those concerns, because you thought that Tracy had done that?

JE And I knew that there had been some things that had been addressed because, if I go back to the meeting about the [REDACTED] there had been some follow-up with the ABT hearing impairment and the parent around that meeting, as a follow-up.

TL So Adam had followed that up?

JE *[Agrees]*.

TL So the feedback had been given to him that ...

JE It went past Adam. So we needed to be able to engage the hearing impairment ABT, the parents and a member of staff to be able to facilitate that back to, okay, what did [REDACTED] need, and there were ongoing meetings with [REDACTED] to de-escalate her concerns and to put a plan in place for her child.

TL And when you say it went past Adam, do you mean that someone else ... that that was taken off him?

JE Yeah, so he didn't have to do that part. Because one of the things that he always explained to me was a difficulty for him, was parent concerns.

TL And in your response you say you "strongly refute the claim that I berated and ripped into Adam"?

JE Oh absolutely.

TL Did you raise your voice during the meeting?

JE No, I didn't.

TL So you maintain that the tone of the meeting was respectful and open and calm?

JE Absolutely.

TL In your response you say that, "Adam knew about those concerns as my deputy and I had talked to Adam throughout the year".

JE The [REDACTED] one I had mentioned to him, yes. Because I had to explain that the ABT would take that role on, and he needed to know that this parent wasn't happy. And I advised him that that would be the way that we would resolve it, through the ABT [REDACTED] to save Adam being personally involved, because the parent discussed her frustration that Adam hadn't listened to her. So, putting him back into that situation would've escalated that concern, and the one for the parent, and the outcome for the child wouldn't have been resolved.

TL So that was a discussion that you had with him?

JE I had had that discussion with him.

TL And then that was the only concern or issue that you had discussed with him?

JE Formally, yep:

TL And informally? Were there other informal discussions?

JE Through Tracy there would've been. [REDACTED]

TL But not with you?

JE No.

TL Okay. So the only discussion you had with Adam about his performance, or the concerns that had been raised with you by ... about the staff or parents, was in relation to the [REDACTED] student?

JE Formally as I can remember.

TL Yeah. When you said informally that would've been through Tracy but this is the only one that you can remember having?

JE Yeah, it would be ... it was my request that Tracy did formally put those issues to Adam and help him resolve those. And I know the management structure was put around those, through those meetings, because I would work with Tracy around what those outcomes were.

TL And you were saying that, in terms of keeping performance management separate from Adam's rehabilitation that ... are you saying that Tracy was having performance discussions with Adam?

JE I wouldn't call them formal performance discussions. We had discussions ...

TL Giving feedback?

JE Yeah, feedback.

TL And then you say in your written response, "Prior discussions or review of work performance was addressed for all staff on an annual teacher performance plan".

JE That's part of the PDP plan.

TL Are you saying that anything specifically was raised with Adam about these concerns with staff or parents as part of that process?

JE PDP, no we don't do the PDP plan like that. It's set up for success and it's matched to professional development.

TL So when you mention this in your response it's not, that's not an avenue for providing feedback about concerns about performance?

JE No.

TL Okay. Did you ever suggest to Adam, either in this meeting or at another time during 2016, that he wasn't doing his job properly?

JE No.

TL Okay. It's been suggested to me that a few months before the end of the year ... so a few months prior to the end of 2016, that you had had a meeting with Adam and that at the end of that meeting he was very upset and that during the meeting you'd effectively told him that no one liked him and that he wasn't doing a good job. What would be your response to that?

JE I'd be surprised.

TL So you don't recall a meeting to that effect?

JE No.

TL Okay. And during the meeting that occurred on the last day of 2016, what is it that you say you said to Adam about his performance during 2016?

JE It wasn't a performance conversation. It was a conversation in order to support Adam and his employment, to keep him at work which I knew was so important. That was my goal. To keep Adam at work in a role that I knew he could be successful in, rather than diminishing his self-esteem and his work value, I guess ... his own work value. So my goal was to get an outcome for Adam in 2017 where he would be happy to come back to work. And I was prepared ... and I know we're talking a lot about Italian, but I do say in my response that wasn't the only avenue. I would've been prepared to do anything to get him back to work in 2017.

TL But in that meeting you did tell him that he wasn't going to be doing an SEP role?

JE Yes.

**TL** And what did you tell him about that?

**JE** I can't remember the words that I used.

**TL** Did he ask why?

**JE** He knew why.

**TL** How did he know why?

**JE** He had stated that ... it wasn't the words that came from me. He had stated that he knew that there had been some feedback around him and some teachers had said stuff and some parents had said stuff and said that he wasn't doing that job. So, those words did not come from me, they came from his own self-reflection.

**TL** Okay. So you didn't tell him during that meeting, you didn't raise with him anything about that there'd been problems with him doing the role in 2016?

**JE** I said, due to the feedback we need to keep him safe and we need to move him into a role that's successful.

**TL** And was your ... because of what you say Adam said to you during that meeting, did you think that that needed any further explanation?

**JE** Absolutely not cause I knew that that would destroy his self-esteem.

**TL** So you say it didn't require extra explanation because you were worried about how he may react to that?

**JE** No. He provided me enough feedback for me to feel confident that he knew why he needed to move. And when I reflect on one of your pieces of paper, that's ... you know, that's what he had said to me.

**TL** Maybe, we'll go to that. So, on the ... in Adam's diary note, the one you've got there in front of you, if you go to the second page ... sorry, the one that's ## there, at the top there. So, the second page of that, item 7. It's numbered down the bottom.

**JE** Yep.

**TL** So, he writes in his diary, "Said no one was happy with the job I had done" and then in brackets, "This in truth to her own staffing model. And could not get any aides to do work with me as they felt they would need to have too much responsibility and do all the work. I was constantly on reactive call.". Do you say that this is what Adam said to you in the meeting?

**JE** No. He knew about the feedback around teachers being unhappy. I think I read ...

**TL** There was another note on the next page, which is item 8, which says, "Last day of school, said all she could offer me was teaching Italian despite GP's recommendation of small group support due to sensory overloading but also responsible for the HOSES role".



JE So ... and that must've been something else but he knew teachers weren't happy.

TL Okay. So you never said to him during the meeting or at any other stage that "no one was happy with the job I had done"?

JE No.

TL And did you ever say to him anything about aides didn't want to work with him?

JE Absolutely not.

TL Okay. Do you have any notes of this meeting?

JE No, I don't.

TL Did you ever keep any notes of any meetings with Adam?

JE Not a lot of formal notes, no. Because that wasn't a rehab meeting and it wasn't a performance meeting. As I said it was ... I wanted it to be more of a chat rather than a formalised meeting. It was either, you know, I had a dilemma of letting him continue where it wasn't a pattern of success, or taking a situation and using my knowledge of what had been successful before, and creating a job for him or some options for him to choose from, for him to move forward and up.

TL And you say that he knew that there hadn't been a pattern of success in his ... ?

JE Yeah.

TL Because ... and the reason you say you knew that was because he told you during the meeting?

JE He said that.

TL Okay. You say in your response that you were "conscious of the workplace rehabilitation policy obligation to ensure all unsatisfactory underperformance processes are deferred for the period of an employee's rehabilitation, unless a treating independent doctor provides medical certification that the employee is fit". How does that fit into this?

JE He wasn't formally on a rehab program by then, as you know. But that policy never left my head because his medical condition did not improve, it declined. And at the same time his family was falling apart. So it's me in the middle trying to solve some of that for him.

TL Yep. And you said before, did you have this in the back of your mind in that meeting ... you felt that you didn't need to go through in detail with him ## *[talking together]*?

JE Certainly not. He had enough information, and he was in a low enough position in his own life for me not to add another layer.

TL Did you have a meeting with Adam in around the middle of the year, in about July,

projecting into next year, looking forward to something positive. My prediction that it would be really, you know, successful way forward. That was my message. I can't be responsible for the perception ... the message that's taken in.

**TL** No. But what I'm asking you is do you deny that you told him that people don't think he's professional?

**JE** Absolutely.

**TL** They didn't like him, they didn't wanna work with him or they thought that he'd done a crap job this year? You deny that you said that to him during the meeting?

**JE** Yeah.

**TL** And that you would deny that you gave him the impression or say to him that "Nobody likes you or wants you here"?

**JE** No.

**TL** Alright. I just wanted to turn now to your response to allegation 8. So in your response ... this is on page 9 of your written response. So the allegation here is that you didn't appropriately support Adam in your role as his rehab officer and that you didn't communicate with him appropriately or provide him with appropriate flexibility graduating to return to work. And then there's the suggestion that there was no "Get well soon" or "Thinking of you" until Adam contacted after eight weeks. So in your written response you clarify that you were on a period of long service leave during that Term 3 period and that you contacted Adam by email on 26 October offering him support and that he responded, "Thanks, Jenny" and, but after that you weren't able to make further contact with him?

**JE** [Agrees].

**TL** Did you try to contact him after that?

**JE** No because I think my email went through on 26 October. He'd taken his own life by 14 November.

**TL** Yeah. But, so when you say that "I wasn't able to make further contact", is that, are you saying that you tried and but couldn't?

**JE** There was other information that came to me that suggested that maybe I shouldn't, with the information about the [REDACTED] and all the things that happened in Term 3. I was just extending the branch of friendship if he needed someone to speak to.

**TL** And what was the specific information you say that came to you that suggested perhaps you shouldn't contact him?

**JE** Well he wouldn't responded more than "Thanks, Jenny" or taken up my offer, I guess, if he wanted to do that. Because it was an open invitation.

**TL** Okay, so there wasn't any information given to you that suggested that you